

Henry Fisher House
East side of State Route 622,
1-1/4 miles north of Yellow House
Yellow House Vicinity, Oley Township
Berks County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1027

HABS
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6-YEL.V.
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HENRY FISHER HOUSE

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Location: East side of State Route 622, 1-1/4 miles north of Yellow House, Yellow House Vicinity, Oley Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: Frank Fisher, R. D., Oley, Pennsylvania

Present Occupant: Owner

Present Use: Residence

Brief Statement of Significance: The Henry Fisher house is generally acknowledged to be the finest example of the Georgian house in Berks County.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Fisher house was built for Henry Fisher in 1801 on the farm that he and his wife Susanna (Ruth) bought from John Leshner, Jr., in 1791. The house was three years in construction, and the master craftsman who did the excellent woodwork, panels, stairway, friezes, etc. was Gottlieb Drexel. The cost of the house, as given by Croll, was \$6,000.00. The house remains in the possession of the Fisher family, having passed from Henry Fisher to Daniel Fisher in 1823, to John G. Fisher in 18--, to Daniel D. Fisher in 1889, and now is owned by Frank Fisher.

References: P. C. Croll, Annals of the Oley Valley (Reading, Pennsylvania: Reading Eagle Press, 1926), pages 33-40.

Dean Kennedy, "Century Old Farm Houses in Oley Valley, Berks County, Pennsylvania," Pencil Points, vol. XIII (August 1932), pages 540-554.

Eleanor Raymond, Early Domestic Architecture in Pennsylvania (New York: William Helburn, 1931).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The Fisher house is an excellent example of the two-story, five-bay Georgian house with end chimneys and two dormers in a gable roof. The entrance door is framed by a handsome arched transom surmounted by a pediment supported by pilasters. The proportions and composition of the door and the cornice suggest that the builder took his forms from a builder's handbook, but in executing the Georgian moldings, he has enriched them with gouge work and delicate wood applique expressive of the Germanic craftsman.

The house is in excellent condition and has been preserved in its original form except for the introduction of modern conveniences and some slight alterations to the kitchen wing at the rear.

The over-all dimensions of the central block are approximately forty feet by thirty feet, with the kitchen wing extending beyond. The foundations and exterior walls are stone. The front door is a six-panel door with a semi-circular fanlight above. The windows are large double-hung sash of twelve-over-twelve lights, with molded sills and large wood lintels with projecting keystones. The first-floor shutters have three panels each and the second-floor shutters are louvered.

The original roof of split cedar shingles, thirty-four inches long and three-fourths of an inch at butt end, was replaced in 1893. The present roof is wood shingle. The two dormers end in a pediment front with delicately molded pilasters and cornice. The dormer windows are round headed with muntins forming two pointed arches, suggesting that the sash may be of a later date.

The plan is of the Georgian type with central stair hall and two rooms on either side. A handsomely carved stairway rises from the central hall. The interior walls and ceiling are plastered. There is a great deal of fine woodwork detail, chair rails, wainscoting, mantels, and door frames. The most unusual trim appears in the master bed chamber where pediments appear above the windows.

The house sits back from the road about fifty feet and faces west. Various outbuildings, such as smoke house, spring house, etc., are grouped around the back of the house where a low stone wall encloses the vegetable garden.

Prepared by Drury B. Alexander
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